The Growing Hispanic Population in South Carolina: Trends and Issues

Richard D. Young

To most, America is still the country where human rights, opportunity, and success are possibilities; it inherently inspires hope in those who want nothing more than to make their contribution.

Jorge Ramos, *The Other Face of America*¹

Introduction

Percentage-wise, the Hispanic² population is the fastest growing demographic segment of today’s populace in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population in America increased from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, or by 57.9%.³ The Bureau estimates that in 2004 the Hispanic population increased to 40.4 million, an additional 14.5% increase over the 2000 figure. Experts also estimate that the undocumented Hispanic population in the United States may currently exceed 10 million persons.⁴

Additionally, the percentage of Hispanic population is growing faster in the South than elsewhere in the United States. This trend began in the early 1990s and continues to the present. Six southern states have experienced the highest percentage rates of increase (over 200%), including North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Alabama.

South Carolina’s Hispanic population increased from 30,551 in 1990 to 96,178 in 2000, or by 211%.⁵ The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2004 the Hispanic population increased to 130,432, an additional increase of 35.7% since the 2000 census.⁶ These numbers do not account for undocumented immigrants; however, the Urban Institute estimates that South Carolina had, in 2002, as many as 75,000 undocumented persons of mostly Hispanic origin.⁷

Most of this recent population growth (from 1990 to present) is attributable to expansive immigration from Latin America, especially Mexico. Much of the growth is due to undocumented or “illegal” immigration. Future growth, according to researchers, will be driven substantially by increases in second generation, U.S. born English-speaking Hispanics.

According to the literature, these trends are expected to continue in the future.⁸ The Hispanic population will continue to grow rapidly and they will also continue to disperse among or within “non-traditional” settlements,⁹ particularly within southern states. While diversity and change is an important, long-standing value of America’s “melting-pot”
culture, many challenges and costs are expected to result from this on-going surge of “new” immigrants.

Out of necessity, experts point out that states will have to act and many have begun to do so, especially in the South. Challenges and issues pertaining to education, employment, health, and transportation are surfacing rapidly and will likely intensify in the future. This paper examines this growth of the Hispanic population and the issues that southern states, in particular South Carolina, are facing both today and in the future.

*Changes in Immigration Trends*

Until the early 1990s, generally speaking, Hispanic immigration to the United States was limited primarily to a small number of states. These so-called “traditional” states of concentrated Hispanic immigration included, for example, California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Illinois and Florida. During the 1990s until the present time, a shift in Hispanic immigration to “non-traditional” states grew exponentially, predominantly among southern states. From 1990 to 2000, for instance, the Hispanic population grew 30% on average in traditional states. For the same period, however, the Hispanic population grew by 126% on average in non-traditional states. In some states in the South, the Hispanic population growth ranged from nearly 400% to over 200%. Specifically, North Carolina’s Hispanic population grew by 394%, Arkansas by 337%, Tennessee by 278%, and South Carolina, as stated earlier, by 211%.  

*Trends in the United States*

From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic population increased in the United States by 57.9%, from 22.4 million to 35.3 million. Mexicans increased more than any other ethnic sub-group or by 52.9%, from 13.5 million to 20.6 million. Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other Hispanics increased substantially also.

Because of these varied growth rates, the *percent distribution* of the Hispanic population by type changed during the decade of the 1990s. Specifically, by the year 2000, Mexicans comprised 58% of all Hispanics in the United States. Puerto Ricans followed at 9.6% and Cubans were 3.5%. Figure 1 below shows the overall percent of distribution of Hispanics by type or sub-group.

Undocumented immigrants from Mexico living in the United States are most numerous among Hispanic sub-groups and should be noted when considering Hispanic population figures. Estimates vary for 2002 from 9.3 million to 5.3 million. According to the Migration Information Source:

About 5.3 million undocumented immigrants from Mexico are living in the United States, according to the estimates based on the March 2002 Current Population Survey as well as census and other government data. Over one in every two Mexican immigrants is
undocumented, compared with about one in every six for the remainder of the foreign born.¹⁴

Figure 1. Percent Distribution of the Hispanic Population by Type: 2000

![Percent Distribution of Hispanics in the United States 2000](image)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Geographically, in 2000, the plurality of Hispanics, or 43.5%, was located in the western United States. However, the South was the second most populated living area for Hispanics at 32.8%. The Northeast and the Midwest Hispanic populations followed next at 14.9% and 8.9%, respectively.

Hispanics in the West made up nearly one-quarter (or 24.3%) of the total population. Hispanics in the South comprised 11.6% of the total population. Mexicans accounted for the highest percentage of Hispanics in both the West and South, or 55.3% and 31.7%, respectively.¹⁵

What are the future trends of Hispanic immigration to the United States? The Pew Hispanic Center¹⁶ estimates that by 2010 the Hispanic population in the United States will number 47.7 million. In 2020, this number will increase to 60.4 million. Of significance, the growth in the Hispanic population in the future will result substantially from second- and third-generation U.S. born Hispanics, rather than foreign-born immigration, as is the current trend. For example, by 2020, second-generation natives will make up 36% of the total Hispanic population in the United States.¹⁷

Trends in the South

Again, the Hispanic population in the South has surged since 1990, more than tripling in several states. North Carolina ranks first among southern states in the percent increase of Hispanics, from 1990 to 2000, at 393.3%. The other southern states with substantial
increases for this period, as mentioned earlier, are as follows: Arkansas (337.0%), Georgia (299.6%), Tennessee (278.2%), South Carolina (211.2%), and Alabama (207.9%). Figure 2 gives a detailed look at the increases in Hispanics in the overall South.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State and Rank by %</th>
<th>Hispanic Pop. In 2000</th>
<th>% of State Population</th>
<th>% Increase 1990-2000</th>
<th>Hispanic Pop. In 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. North Carolina</td>
<td>378,963</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>393.9</td>
<td>76,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arkansas</td>
<td>86,866</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>337.0</td>
<td>19,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Georgia</td>
<td>435,227</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>299.6</td>
<td>108,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tennessee</td>
<td>123,838</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>278.2</td>
<td>32,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. South Carolina</td>
<td>95,076</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>211.2</td>
<td>30,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Alabama</td>
<td>75,830</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>207.9</td>
<td>24,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUB-TOTAL</td>
<td>1,195,800</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>293,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Kentucky</td>
<td>59,939</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>172.6</td>
<td>21,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mississippi</td>
<td>39,569</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>148.4</td>
<td>15,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Virginia</td>
<td>329,540</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>105.6</td>
<td>160,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. West Virginia</td>
<td>12,279</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>8,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Louisiana</td>
<td>107,738</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>93,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,744,865</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>593,181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The total Hispanic population in 1990 for the 11 states in Figure 2 was 593,181. In 2000, the Hispanic population had grown to 1,744,865. This is an increase of 1,151,884 persons, or a 194.2% jump for the ten-year period. Interestingly, more than half of these Hispanics immigrated over a five-year period, from 1995-2000.18

More specifically, the top six states with the highest percentages of growth in the Hispanic population in 1990—North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Alabama—totaled 293,445. In 2000, Hispanics increased substantially to 1,195,800. This is a numerical increase over 1990 of 902,355 persons, or a percent change of 307.5%.19

Demographic characteristics of Hispanics in the South are also noteworthy. Hispanics in the South—again, focusing on the top six states discussed above, are mainly foreign-born (57%), male (63%), and relatively young (average age 27). Seventy-three percent are from Mexico. Most speak little or no English (57%) and the majority is ill-educated (62% lack a high school education). Many, perhaps more than half, are additionally undocumented immigrants. Hispanics are as well settling in a variety of communities including large cities, suburbs, and rural areas—essentially wherever economic or work opportunities are available.20
According to experts, however, many of the male Hispanics coming to the South “are staying, marrying and having children.” Therefore, like the nation as a whole, future trends indicate that Hispanics will increasingly be U.S. born.

Of importance, future trend data indicate that the Hispanic population growth in the South will continue at a rapid pace. Analysis by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates, for example, that by 2025, Hispanics will number more than 9.5 million persons, or 32.1% of a total estimated population increase for the South (or 29.6 million).

**Figure 3. Population Change of Regions by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2025**

(In thousands.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Change</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Change</th>
<th>Hispanic Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>72,295</td>
<td>15,594</td>
<td>11,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>5,927</td>
<td>-2,074</td>
<td>2,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>7,306</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>1,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>29,558</td>
<td>10,407</td>
<td>9,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>29,504</td>
<td>5,436</td>
<td>16,028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Trends in South Carolina**

Research shows clearly that the Hispanic population in South Carolina is growing significantly. As stated previously in this paper, Hispanics in South Carolina increased from 30,551 in 1990 to 96,178 in 2000. The percent growth for this period is 211.7%. In short, this simply means that Hispanics are the largest and fastest growing ethnic group or category of South Carolina’s total population.

Further, as of 2004, estimates indicate that the Hispanic population was 130,432, an exponential increase over 2000 of 35.7%. This 2004 estimate does not include undocumented Hispanics that may include additional persons anywhere from a range of 45,000 to 75,000 individuals.

Other data and facts of interest with regard to South Carolina’s Hispanic population growth include:

- Currently, South Carolina has the fourth fastest growing Hispanic population in the United States.
- Since 2000, one in six new South Carolina residents are Hispanic.
- In 5% of South Carolina homes, Spanish or another language other than English is spoken.
- Between 2000 and 2002, South Carolina’s Hispanic population growth rate, by percent, outpaced all but three states (North Carolina, Nevada and Georgia).
In terms of ethnic sub-groups, the Hispanic immigrant population is comprised of persons from 12 different countries—mainly Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. More than half are from Mexico. (See Figures 4 and 5).

**Figure 4. Diversity of Hispanics in South Carolina by Country of Origin, 1990-2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic Origin</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>11,028</td>
<td>52,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>6,423</td>
<td>12,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>1,652</td>
<td>2,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rican</td>
<td></td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemalan</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduran</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>1,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaraguan</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panamanian</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvadoran</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbian</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>3,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic</td>
<td>8,102</td>
<td>16,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISPANIC TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,551</strong></td>
<td><strong>95,076</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 5. Primary Hispanic Sub-Groups in South Carolina, 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>MEXICAN</th>
<th>PUERTO RICAN</th>
<th>CUBAN</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>52,871</td>
<td>12,211</td>
<td>2,875</td>
<td>27,119</td>
<td>95,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Consortium for Latino Immigration Studies, University of South Carolina.

Generally, recent Hispanic immigrants to South Carolina reflect similar demographic characteristics as those in other southern states. The majority is male, young, speaks little or no English, and is lacking a high school education. They work typically in low-paying jobs in agriculture, construction, landscaping, meat-processing, non-durable manufacturing positions, and a variety of unskilled service-oriented jobs.

In terms of geographic location, Hispanic immigrants settle in all areas or counties of the state. Based on 2002 population estimates for South Carolina, the five counties with the numerical highest concentrations were Greenville (17,929), Beaufort (9,572), Richland (9,430), Spartanburg (8,489), and Horry (6,200). From another perspective, the five counties with the highest percentage of Hispanic immigrant growth between 1990 and 2000 were Laurens (29.7%), Lee (29.2%), Saluda (27.6%), Greenville (25.5%), and Pickens (22.6%). Again, these are numbers that do not account for undocumented immigrants. (See Figure 6).
Finally, South Carolina's population is expected to grow an average 40,000 each year from the year 2005 through 2025. The growth rate over the same period will average just under 1.0% per year. This is lower than the 1.5 % annual growth rate experienced in the 1990s. This constitutes a total state population increase from 4,012,012 in 2000 to 4,907,800 in 2025.\(^9\)

While no data could be found on long-term estimates specifically for Hispanic population growth in South Carolina, it can be assumed that an increase in the state’s immigration trends of today will continue into the near future, certainly to 2010 and possibly to 2015. Add to this second-generation U.S.-born Hispanics and undocumented immigrants and, further, it can be logically assumed that the Hispanic population in South Carolina will continue to grow significantly in the future.\(^{30}\)
Causes for Immigration Growth

There are many causes for the growth of Hispanic immigrants to the United States, and more recently, to the South generally. These causes apply as well to the recent and fast growing Hispanic population migrating to South Carolina.

By and large, one important cause has to do with relatively new and favorable public policy decisions, namely laws, international agreements, regulatory provisions, etc. Another reason relates to the difficulties associated generally with the enforcement of immigration laws. Still another cause is related to new and established migration networks that facilitate both the legal and illegal immigration of Hispanics. And, of course there are quite simply “quality of life” issues that have contributed to a rise in immigrant populations. However, the most significant and compelling cause of Hispanic immigration, past and present, was and remains economic opportunities—jobs.

In the South, the rapid increase in the Hispanic population has been due principally to the economic boom which began in the early 1990s. This robust economic situation made unprecedented employment opportunities available and Hispanics flocked to the South in search of jobs. For example, in the six southern states with the greatest influx of Hispanics (i.e., Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee), the unemployment rate was below the national rate for the period 1990 through 2004. Additionally, plentiful low-skilled jobs were available in industries and businesses as well. These businesses and industries included construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and domestic services.

**Figure 7. The Distribution of Hispanic Workers by Industry in the U.S. and South, 2000**

<p>| The Distribution of Workers by Industry in New Settlement States, 2000 (in percent) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanics</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Alabama</th>
<th>Arkansas</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>North Carolina</th>
<th>South Carolina</th>
<th>Tennessee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agr., forestry, mining, etc.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info., comm. and utilities</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to a recent report, brisk employment growth in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee has coincided with the overall healthy economy of the entire South.

The growth in employment in the six new South states reflected the regional trend. Most of these states added jobs at a faster rate than the national average. Georgia led the way with an annual average increase in employment of 2.9% per year between 1990 and 2000. That was well above the national rate of growth in employment of 1.8% per year. Only Alabama, at 1.6% per year, lagged the nation in adding jobs. The new settlement counties not only added Hispanic population at among the highest rates in the country but also averaged job growth of 2.7% per year in the 1990s. [Emphasis added].

Thus, “an economic logic”—so to speak—presents itself as to the rapid growth of Hispanic immigration to southern states (including South Carolina). One element of this economic logic includes employment opportunities, or what has been referred to as “the pulling force.” A second factor relates to declining opportunities in Latin America, a.k.a. “the pushing force.” And, lastly, a third element pertains to high productivity among Hispanic workers, referred to as “the sustaining force.”

The trend of Hispanic immigration to South Carolina is similar. According to the director of the University of South Carolina’s Consortium of Latino Studies, Elaine Lacy, there are eight basic reasons for Hispanics choosing to work and settle in South Carolina. These include 1) the military bases in the state that offer various economic opportunities, 2) the amnesty afforded by the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, 3) South Carolina’s economy and the job opportunities it provides, 4) industrial strategies by employers used to recruit workers, 5) migration networks or channels that facilitate relocation and settlement, 6) the state’s low cost of living, 7) a favorable climate, and 8) the relative tranquility and safety of the state.

South Carolina’s vigorous economy from 1990 to 2000 provided a sustained and viable environment for job seekers, especially those with few skills who were willing to avail themselves of low paying jobs. In terms of overall economic activity during the decade of the 1990s, employment in South Carolina increased by some 345,000 jobs or by 17.9%. Average wages per worker grew from $19,406 to $26,520 or by 36.7%.

Still, it should be noted that Hispanics were typically paid less than average wages for this period. With an average education of seven years, the lack of English-speaking skills, and employment mainly in low-paying industries—such as food processing, landscaping, agriculture, construction, and light manufacturing—Hispanics in South Carolina averaged approximately $14,000 per worker. With usually no work benefits, Hispanics were obviously and, to this day, remain chiefly at the bottom rung of the labor force in South Carolina.
Similarly, a report published by the Darla Moore School of Business states:

Low wages, poor working conditions, and child labor often characterize the jobs that Hispanics possess in the United States. In South Carolina, for example, common jobs include landscaping, peach picking, mop and broom companies, chicken processing plants, and meatpacking. To these companies, Hispanics are an essential part of the labor force and are highly recruited. In our research, two types of employers were identified. The first employer takes responsibility for paperwork, housing, and other essentials of living for their Hispanic employees. The second type of employer is said to take advantage of Hispanic workers. According to participants, this type of employer pays lower wages than allowed and takes significant deductions from paychecks for housing and transportation costs.39

Issues and Challenges

Several significant issues or barriers arise from the rush of Hispanics to the United States, the South and, specifically, South Carolina. These pose serious problems and challenges to public policy makers, human right advocates, and service delivery personnel. Many are associated with language and assimilation issues. Others are associated more directly to problems or barriers which include the areas of education, health, public safety, transportation, housing, and the legal system. Some of these issues and challenges are discussed in the narrative which follows.

Language and Assimilation

Above all, the language and assimilation problems associated with Hispanics permeate all areas of concern (education, health, etc.) and at all levels—in the United States, the South, and South Carolina in particular. In the United States, 72% of first generation Hispanic immigrants speak Spanish only, 24% are bilingual (mainly Spanish- and English-speaking), and 4% speak dominantly English. For U.S. born, second generation Hispanics, the language skills shift dramatically: only 7% are Spanish dominant, 47% are bilingual, and 46% are English-dominant. Third and later generations of Hispanics are less than one percent Spanish-dominant, 22% are bilingual, and 78% speak English.40 41

Obviously, with regard to the recent expansion of Hispanic immigrants to the South, including South Carolina, research indicates that the majority of Hispanics speak little or no English at all. Again, according to recent data, 57% of foreign-born Hispanics in new settlement areas of the South do not speak English or do not speak it fluently.42

Connected to the language barriers of Hispanic immigrants is the assimilation of American cultural values, opinions and behaviors. Hispanics who speak little or no English have a strong tendency to maintain the traditions, values, and views of their countries of origin. These pertain to issues such as divorce, abortion and homosexuality.43
A Pew/Kaiser survey reported, for instance, that 90% of foreign-born, Spanish-speaking Hispanics in the United States believed that abortion is unacceptable compared to 64% English-dominant Hispanics.\textsuperscript{44}

Fatalism is another strong belief held by many new, Spanish-dominant Hispanics. The Pew/Kaiser survey found that 59% of these Hispanics held such a point of view.

Fatalism, or the belief that it does not do any good to plan for the future because you do not have any control over your fate, is widespread in Latin America, particularly among the poor. A majority of Spanish-dominant Latinos, overwhelmingly an immigrant population, espouses this view, but its prevalence is lower among Hispanics who are bilingual, and lower still among those who are English dominant. These two categories of Latinos, primarily a native-born population, have views on this topic similar to non-Hispanics.\textsuperscript{45}

It is important to note, however, that while there are cultural differences among Hispanic immigrants who speak mainly Spanish and those Hispanics with fluent English-speaking abilities, these differences should not be over-generalized. Additionally, cultural assimilation should also be seen in light of other factors such as age, sex, education, etc.

\textit{Education}

Hispanics are having a major impact on public school systems across the United States. In 2001, 8.4 million Hispanic children were attending grades K-12 across the nation. This comprises 16% of all public school students. Hispanic school children (ages 5-19) are estimated to be currently (in 2005) 11 million. Projections are that by 2020 this number will grow to 16 million.\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{Figure 8. U.S. School Enrollment, Hispanics and Non-Hispanics by Grade Level, 2001}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{GRADE LEVEL} & \textbf{1ST GENERATION} & \textbf{2ND GENERATION} & \textbf{3RD+ GENERATION} & \textbf{ALL HISPANICS} & \textbf{WHITE} & \textbf{BLACK} & \textbf{OTHER} & \textbf{TOTAL} \\
\hline
Kindergarten & 44 & 431 & 244 & 718 & 2,280 & 582 & 208 & 3,788 \\
Grades 1-4 & 312 & 1,588 & 858 & 2,758 & 10,140 & 2,566 & 874 & 16,338 \\
Grades 5-8 & 484 & 1,420 & 808 & 2,712 & 10,470 & 2,649 & 901 & 16,732 \\
High school & 551 & 1,048 & 628 & 2,277 & 10,390 & 2,541 & 889 & 16,047 \\
Total & 1,391 & 4,467 & 2,538 & 6,416 & 33,280 & 8,338 & 2,673 & 52,306 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{U.S. School Enrollment, Hispanics and Non-Hispanics by Grade Level, 2001}
\end{table}


In the South, the six fastest growing Hispanic population states—North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Alabama—also had substantial percentage increases in school-age Hispanic children. From 1990 to 2000, Hispanic children (ages 5-17) grew by 322% compared to Caucasians (10%) and African Americans (18%).\textsuperscript{47} Though these percent increases are remarkable, still it should be
noted that the actual distribution figures of Hispanic school age children in relation to the
total school population for the South was a little over 4%.

Numerically, in 1990, there were 55,199 Hispanic school children in the six southern
states, and by 2000, this number increased to 232,756. This is a ten-year increase of
177,577 Hispanic school-age children. Of interest also, there were 28,743 Hispanic pre-
schoolers (ages 0-4) in 1990 and 110,000 in 2000. Further, it is estimated that by 2007,
the six new settlement southern states will have a total 535,000 Hispanic public school
students.48

In the South, the growth of the students is even more pointed since—as discussed
generally above—many children are immigrants and speak little or no English. The Pew
Hispanic Center found that in 1990, 18,000 students in the six new southern settlement
states spoke limited English. In 2000, 64,000 students spoke limited English, a 261%
increase over the decade.49

In South Carolina, the State Department of Education reported that in 2000-2001 its 86
school districts had 5,525 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. According to a
report published by the South Carolina Hispanic/Latino Ad Hoc Committee50 in 2003,
though these figures “appear relatively small, in fact they place a strain on the state’s
educational resources.” In particular, the committee identified three broad areas that
hampered the educational needs of LEP students—language barriers, service barriers, and
poor communication within the educational system. The committee also recommended
changes to address these barriers.

More specifically, the Ad Hoc Committee found that, for example, English for Speakers
of Other Languages (ESOL) programs were generally under-funded, understaffed,
unmonitored, and uncoordinated. Additionally, other problems included:

- Poor communication with immigrant parents.
- No testing programs in Spanish.
- General lack of bilingual personnel in schools and school district
  offices.
- Unfamiliarity with Hispanic cultural differences.
- Lack of data collection on race and ethnicity.51

The committee made 18 recommendations to address the problems associated with
education and Hispanics in South Carolina. Among these were:

- Provide appropriate and qualified staffing to coordinate policy
  matters, monitoring, reporting and technical assistance needed to
  serve the needs of seasonal, migrant, and resident Hispanic/Latino
  children.
- Offer advocacy services for Hispanic/Latino parents and their
  children;
• Require all schools to have translated forms available for parents of LEP students in the school office.
• Require staff development and training for staff at the school district level related to addressing the needs of LEP students.
• Increase funding for ESOL programs and for school districts that work with LEP students.
• Increase funding for all educational programs within school districts that develop and implement plans to address educational concerns for ESOL children.  

Finally, it should be noted that recently an official of the State Department of Education stated that as of May 2005, South Carolina had 16,049 English Language Learners (ELLs). The five top school districts were Greenville, Beaufort, Charleston, Horry and Richland 2. Of these ELLs, it is estimated that 75% to 80% are Hispanic (12,037 to 12,839 Spanish-speaking pupils). Further, the department official stated that from 1993 to 2004, the Office of English Language Acquisition at the U.S. Department of Education shows a cumulative growth of ELL population in South Carolina of 521%.  

Health Care

In 2004, Hispanics represented more than 13% of the population in the United States (40.4 million persons). One of the most significant issues and challenges for Hispanics in America, for both documented and undocumented individuals, is health care.

According to the literature, though estimates vary, Hispanics who speak predominately Spanish are more likely to have health problems, typically do not have a regular physician, lack insurance, and depend mainly on public health services. One reliable survey, completed in 2001, reported that 66% of Hispanics in the United States, who speak mainly Spanish, do not have a regular doctor; that 45% have no insurance; and that 33% use only public health services.  

Again, language barriers are the main culprit to Hispanic immigrants receiving quality health care. It is reported that a least half of the nation’s Spanish-speaking or “dominate” Hispanics, who actually sought medical assistance or care, “had difficulties communicating with their doctors.” Additionally, nearly 50% had some difficulty understanding prescription medicine instructions. (See Figure 9).

In the South, the Hispanic immigrant population is at risk in particular. Language and other barriers like those discussed above are equally or more prevalent. Additionally, Hispanics have higher rates of diabetes and hypertension. They also have higher rates of cancer and heart disease. Prenatal care and occupational disabilities are also widespread among Hispanics living in the South.
In a 2004 report by the National Council of La Raza and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, the health care needs of Hispanics in the South were studied to offer a “snapshot” of the most critical issues facing policy makers and service providers in the health field and government. The report’s main findings echo the issues and challenges of the general literature on the topic of Hispanics and health care. These findings were:

- Latinos are reluctant to use available sources of health care and are treated differently from other patients when accessing care.
- Spanish-language media is the best means to distribute information to the Latino community.
- The primary barrier to accessing health care is related to language and communication issues.

In South Carolina, the health care needs and issues of Hispanics have been discussed in several reports. One report by the Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina, found that some employers—for example—“fail to inform Hispanic workers about health insurance or workers’ compensation….”

The report also stated:

Several social workers reported observing cases in which Hispanics have had traumatic operations and have had no knowledge of the medical procedures or outcomes. According to one social worker, a Hispanic woman was operated on at a local South Carolina hospital without knowledge of the procedure being performed on her. The surgery this 33-year-old woman had undergone was a hysterectomy.
Often there are no translators available at hospitals, and Hispanics may not trust the translators that are provided to them. Social workers at the session suggested that Hispanics are not educated on preventative health care and tend to use emergency room care, which is very expensive. 

As in education, the South Carolina Hispanic/Latino Ad Hoc Committee (2003) reported several findings and recommendations connected to the health care of South Carolina’s Hispanic population. The committee’s findings reflect those of other studies; namely, the existence and prevalence of language barriers, cultural competencies, service barriers, lack of data, and immigration and social issues, again, all associated with health care and treatment of Spanish-dominate Hispanics throughout the state.

The Ad Hoc Committee found that, for example, “communication directly impacts the degree and quality of health services.” Indeed, the committee stated that poor communication between Hispanics and service providers could contribute to misdiagnosis and/or malpractice cases. Additionally, lack of insurance makes it difficult for Hispanics in South Carolina to get access to quality health care services, especially for long-term, chronic and serious diseases. Furthermore, health providers presuppose that fees for services will not be regained; and similarly, hospitals are uninformed about federal laws applicable to both documented and undocumented immigrants and federal repayment plans.

The Ad Hoc Committee, acknowledging these and other problems related to Hispanics and health care, made several recommendations. Some of these include:

- Active support by the Office of the Governor and all relevant health and human services state agencies, hospitals, and other health care delivery organizations, for the statewide adoption and implementation of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS), as mandated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.
- Coordination is necessary to reach public and private health care providers who (1) receive federal funding or (2) see patients who receive federal funding. To this end: Implement a continuous statewide educational program regarding (1) the National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health Care. The training should be targeted toward key state agency administrators, public and private health care executives and administrators, personnel from professional associations (e.g. medical, pharmaceutical, nursing, insurance, hospital associations).
- The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs should serve as the clearinghouse for all information related to the Latino/Hispanic population.
Housing

Most Hispanics, especially recent immigrants, are renters. In the United States, 52% of the Hispanic population currently lives in rented housing (e.g., versus 24% Caucasian renters). The typical, newly arrived Hispanic immigrant, according to the literature, has little or no financial resources (i.e., to pay a rental deposit or for utility start-ups, etc.), few possessions, and no credit. Often, a Hispanic immigrant will stay with relatives already in the United States or perhaps, in other cases, share rent with other immigrants.

Frequently, Hispanic immigrants rent what constitutes substandard housing or housing that doesn’t meet local building or safety codes. Landlords, in these cases, also typically ignore fair housing laws as well. Additionally, unscrupulous landlords sometimes will charge rent by the person (e.g., $100 or more per resident) instead of by the housing unit. Such abuse goes often unreported particularly among undocumented Hispanics.

In addition, Hispanic renters often face outright discrimination. The Urban Institute reports that discrimination against Hispanic renters remained constant from 1989 through 2000. Also, “non-Hispanic whites were consistently favored 25.7% over Hispanics in tests” conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This exceeds, according to the Urban Institute, “the incidence rate of African-American renters.”

Homeownership rates among Hispanics in the United States and related issues are striking as well. In mid-2004, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) reported that Hispanic homeownership rates grew steadily during the 1990s, and in 2001, reached 47.3%. However, by 2003, homeownership among Hispanics fell 0.6%. (Still, ownership among new Hispanic immigrants was problematic since the accumulation of assets and wealth is recognized to be not generally possible for this segment of the Hispanic population.) Other key findings by the NCLR included: 1) affordability continues to be a problem considering that on average Hispanics spend a third of their income on housing; and, 2) twice as many Hispanics as Caucasians reported problems with building construction and quality.

In the South’s six principal settlement states, 65% of Hispanics are renters (e.g., versus 21% Caucasians). Logically, given the economic and social circumstances of newly settled Hispanics, the rapid increase of immigrants to the South is in line with the rise in rented properties. In terms of homeownership, the opposite is the case, namely there have been fewer houses purchased. As Figure 10 illustrates, Hispanics made up only 4% of the growth share of all owned housing units during the 1990s, while they comprised 27% of the growth in the total of all rented housing units. Comparatively speaking, for the same period, Caucasians growth in owner-occupied housing units was 68%, and the increase in rented housing units was 11%.
Finally, in South Carolina, in 2003, there were 9,649 Hispanic homeowners, representing 30.7% of the state’s total Hispanic population. Renters accounted for roughly 70% of the remaining Hispanic population.69

It should be noted that housing is generally located, when possible, near where Hispanics work and thus transportation needs are reduced.70 Data suggest also that Hispanics spend, on average, about 30% of their net pay or income on housing. This appears likely given the assumption that a typical Hispanic worker earns approximately $9-10 per hour in wages, amounting to an average net monthly pay of around $1,120.71

In 2003, it was estimated that some 46,000 Hispanics in South Carolina were in the state’s labor force. This is a participation rate of 72.6%. Those Hispanics below the poverty level numbered 20,396, or 21.8% of all Hispanics in South Carolina. According to the National Council of La Raza, Hispanics in South Carolina “are especially vulnerable to economic downturns and experience high poverty rates.”72 This is particularly true “among working Hispanic families with children.”73

Finally, the South Carolina Hispanic/Latino Ad Hoc Committee made a principal finding in its 2003 report regarding the issue of housing. This finding stated:

Hispanic/Latino persons are often taken advantage of by landlords, who rent rundown housing by person occupancy. One example, was given of a group of six men that were charged $200 per person to live in a rundown mobile home. The slumlord was making $1,200 a month by exploiting these individuals.74

Other Issues and Challenges

Three other issues and challenges of importance to Hispanics in South Carolina are touched upon briefly below.
Public Safety. The Council of State Governments reports that Hispanic immigrants often do not understand local, state or federal laws. Much of this lack of knowledge has to do, of course, with language barriers, while other problems result from cultural differences. This finding coincides with the findings of the South Carolina Hispanic/Latino Ad Hoc Committee (2003). Specific problems or issues included:

- Most law officers, EMS personnel, dispatchers, and 911 operators do not speak Spanish.
- Ethnic profiling of Hispanic persons is common.
- Only limited statistics on the Hispanic population are available, including a lack of accuracy and uniformity in collecting/reporting information.
- Lack of funding hampers law enforcement and emergency service personnel from taking "survival" Spanish classes.

Human Rights. Mainly, the issue here is one of workers’ rights and civil rights. Hispanic workers are entitled to the same rights under the law as other workers. More specifically, this applies to wage and hour laws. In many cases, for example, the literature states that Hispanics are subjected to work overtime without proper compensation. Generally speaking, there is also a misconception that undocumented immigrants are not subject to Workers’ Compensation laws. Additionally with regard to civil rights, Hispanics and Hispanic support groups believe that numerous instances of violations of civil rights occur because of ethnic prejudices held by some employers, businesses, landlords, public safety officials, etc. Observers and experts in Hispanic studies and legal defense associations believe that pro-active efforts should be expanded to inform and ensure Hispanics, particularly non-English speaking immigrants, of their civil rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and other applicable federal and state laws. When and where possible, cultural diversity training should also be provided to employers and employees who regularly interact with Hispanics.

Transportation. Transportation is important to everyone. One must normally have available and dependable transportation to get to and from work. All other activities (e.g., shopping, medical care, recreation, etc.), commonly require transportation as well.

Regularly, especially in rural and small towns across South Carolina, public transportation is not available. This is challenging for Hispanics, many of whom do not have either a driver’s license or a private vehicle. This situation is above all indicative of undocumented Hispanics.

Controversy is associated with the idea of providing undocumented Hispanics with driver’s licenses. This controversy has intensified since 9/11. Many Americans, as well as South Carolinians feel that only legal immigrants should have the right to a driver’s license. Others feel that it is humane to permit anyone a driver’s license, as long as they are competent drivers and do not pose a threat to public safety.
Current state legislation, for example, points to these issues and concerns among some state lawmakers. Senate Bill 121 currently would make it a crime to use the driver’s license number of another person to obtain employment. Senate Bill 523 would invoke penalties for hiring undocumented immigrants.

Conclusion

Like the United States, and most significantly the South, the Palmetto State is experiencing unprecedented growth in the Hispanic population as well. Rapid growth in six southern states, including South Carolina, has been specially evidenced over the last 12-14 years. With estimated increases of greater than 250% (1990-2002), South Carolina has found itself to be one of the burgeoning states with Hispanic immigrants who live, work and contribute to the state’s vital socio-economic status. Of importance, and by all accounts, this ethnic population trend is expected to continue into the future.

This paper has discussed, in some detail, the demographic make-up of this increase in the Hispanic population. More importantly, this paper has examined briefly public policy and service issues and challenges that have risen due to Hispanic population increases. These challenges fall mainly in the areas of education, health, and housing. Also, other areas of interest and concern pertain to public safety, human rights, and transportation.

Given the facts, South Carolina must act—on all levels—in a concerted and timely fashion to prepare and implement public strategies aimed at these Hispanic newcomers. Such actions will ensure that the state meets the needs of its fastest-growing segment of population and, likewise, enjoys the maximum social and economic benefits that Hispanics bring to South Carolina.

References


ENDNOTES

2 “Hispanic” is now a term used interchangeably with “Latino” by persons and organizations, including the U.S. Census Bureau. Hispanics include those foreign-born or with ancestry from Mexico, Central and South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, or Spain.
9 “Non-traditional” implies areas or states where Hispanics have traditionally settled such as California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Florida.
12 Ibid.
13 MPI is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization which specializes in the study of migration worldwide.
16 See http://pewhispanic.org/.
19 It is important to note that though the percentages for the South are substantial, the absolute numbers are relatively ‘modest’ when compared to, for example, the ‘traditional state’ of California… whose Hispanic population grew by 43%—from 1990 to 2000— but increased in absolute numbers by greater than 3.3 million persons.
21 Ibid. p. 8.
Further, South Carolina's total population for 2000 was 4,012,000 making the Hispanic population percent total 2.4%.

As Mey and Harris noted, “The rapid growth of Latino populations in the United States, and in states such as South Carolina in particular, has garnered great attention from the media, lawmakers, policy makers, and social service providers. In 1990, Latinos represented 1.1 percent of the total population of South Carolina. This compares with 9.0 percent of the U. S. population as a whole. Latinos as a percent of the state’s population rose to 2.4 percent at the time of the 2000 Census of the United States, effective April 1, 2000. The comparable figure for the country as a whole was 12.5 percent.”

“While the increase for South Carolina may not seem terribly significant, it represents a rate of increase of 211.2 percent, compared with a rate of increase of 57.9 percent for the nation as a whole [1]. Census estimates from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2002 reveal that the percent of Latino residents in South Carolina had increased to 2.7 percent, which represents a rate of change of 14.9 percent. This rate of increase places South Carolina as the state with the fourth highest rate of increase in Latino population.” Mey, B. and Harris, A. (2004, January). “Latino populations in South Carolina, 1990-2000.” Working Paper. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, p. 1. Retrieved August 30, 2005 from http://www.cas.sc.edu/cli/documents/Vandermey%20working%20paper.pdf.

“110,030 people in South Carolina reported speaking Spanish at home in 2000, and 53,604 of these people reported speaking English less than ‘very well.’” Retrieved August 30, 2005 from http://www.sccommunityprofiles.org/pdf_files/who_are_we_now.pdf.

These data were compiled from census data: the U.S. Census Bureau and the S.C. Office of Research and Statistical Services.

As noted by Passel et al, “Barring major changes in the nation's legal immigration policy, its enforcement strategies, or a sustained deterioration in the economy, it is likely that overall migration and migration from Mexico in particular will continue at roughly current levels. Thus, the United States can anticipate the entry of another 14 million immigrants between 2000 and 2010 with net migration of at least 400,000 Mexicans per year. Under these assumptions, the foreign-born population would increase from 31 million in 2000 to about 40 million in 2010, to represent 13 percent of the total population. The Mexican-born population would grow from about nine million in 2000 to almost 13 million in 2010; at that point, more than 10 percent of the Mexican-born population would be in the United States with less than 90 percent in Mexico.” Passel, J. et al. (2004, January 12). “Undocumented immigrants: facts and figures.” Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved August 25, 2005 from http://www.urban.org/Template.cfm?NavMenuID=24&template=/TaggedContent/ViewPublication.cfm&PublicationID=8685.

While the percentage increases in the employment of Latinos are astounding, the absolute increases in number are more modest. In the six Southern states combined, the total increase in Hispanic employment was just over 404,000, and that accounted for less than 10% of the nationwide increase of 4.4 million in Latino employment. All together, these six states added jobs for 1.9 million non-Hispanic workers between 1990 and 2000. That amounted to 20% of the nationwide increase of 9.7 million in non-Latino employment. Overall, more than 80% of the new jobs created in these states in the 1990s were filled by non-Hispanic workers and fewer than 20% by Hispanics. The Hispanic share of new jobs was much higher on a nationwide basis as Latinos captured 31% of the 14 million new jobs created nationally between 1990 and 2000.” Pew Hispanic Center. (2005, July 26). “The new Latino South: the context and consequences of rapid population growth,” p. 25. Report prepared for presentation by R. Kochhar et al. Retrieved August 31, 2005 from http://pewhispanic.org/files/execsum/50.pdf.


The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was passed to control unauthorized immigration to the United States. Employer sanctions, increased appropriations for enforcement, and


38 Though the Hispanic workforce in South Carolina typically earns lower pay, their economic impact is considered “substantial.” According to Dr. Doug Woodward, of the Darla Moore Business School, University of South Carolina, “the total economic impact of Latinos on the state is $2.35 billion….” “Latinos are now part of the workforce in all areas of South Carolina….” "Increasingly, Latinos are moving into the mainstream of the Carolina economy. “ Retrieved September 13, 2005 from http://uscnnews.sc.edu/badm195.html.


41 “Despite public opinion to the contrary, the data suggest that U.S. Hispanics--both native born and immigrants--do learn and speak English. Moreover, they want their children to speak English. After 10 to 15 years in the United States, some 75% of all Hispanic immigrants are speaking English regularly, and virtually all their children will speak English.” Retrieved September 1, 2005 from http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9221/spanish.htm.


43 Catholicism obviously affects many Hispanic views and values. Statistically, the percentage of U.S. Catholics who are Hispanic is 39%. The percentage of Hispanics who are Catholic (2002) is 72.6%. Retrieved September 5, 2005 from http://www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/demo.shtml.


46 Ibid. p. 83.  


48 Ibid. p. 38.  

49 Ibid.

50 The Hispanic/Latino Ad Hoc Committee consisted of 20 members from around South Carolina. Ultimately, the committee completed a report to advise then Governor Jim Hodges on Hispanic needs in several critical areas (viz., education, health, public safety, human rights, and immigration, transportation and fraud).  


52 Ibid.


55 Ibid.


57 See http://www.nclr.org/section/atlanta/.  


According to the literature, transportation needs are—in many cases—a chief concern for Hispanics. 

A general review of the literature suggests that some estimates of average monthly take-home pay are greater $1,300-$1,500. Additionally, a recent study by economist Doug Woodward, University of South Carolina, found that Hispanics “living in Hilton Head Island reported average monthly earnings of $1,995, approximately $600 more than Hispanics living in Lexington.” Retrieved September 12, 2005 from http://uscnews.sc.educ/badm195.html.

In 2003, the average unemployment rate for all South Carolinians was 6.8%. For Hispanics, it was 10.7%.

Economist Doug Woodward, University of South Carolina, states that “at Mexican mobile consulates, immigrants can receive an official Mexican ID card—a ‘matricula’—that enables Mexicans to obtain U.S. driver’s licenses, open bank accounts, qualify for loans, and access many state and local services.” Retrieved September 12, 2005 from http://uscnews.sc.educ/badm195.html.

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